Peer instruction harnesses the power of the students to generate learning. It requires a way to quickly tally responses from students (usually with clickers or from a cell phone/computer. See “Technology” on the Additional Resources page for clicker website options). However, there are many ways to gather that information that do not require technology. This At-A-Glance will assume the instructor is using clickers or a clicker-function through a cell phone or computer.

### Peer Instruction At-A- glance

| Prep       | ● Create a series of multiple choice questions about the content.  
|            | ● Embed them into the visuals of your presentation or create slides with the questions on them.  
|            | ● Ensure each student has a device with clicker capabilities when they enter the classroom. |
| During     | ● Display the question to the class.  
|            | ● Tally the results.  
|            | ● Give students a few minutes to “turn-and-talk” with a neighbor about some aspect of the question and/or answer.  
|            | ● Optional: Ask one or two students to share what he/she learned from his/her conversation.  
|            | ● Repeat the process to see if the results change. |
| After      | ● Collect all clickers from students if students are using school clickers.  
|            | ● Use the information from the polling to craft the foci of your next class. |

#### Prep

Create a series of multiple choice questions about the content.
- They can be interspersed throughout the lecture, or gathered at the beginning or midpoint of your lesson.
- The questions are usually closed-ended. For instance, questions that have the following type of answers:
  - yes/no
  - true/false
  - one right answer out of several options
- Try to make the wrong answers plausible so students have to think about the answer.
- This type of activity can also be used with normative questions that do not have correct answers, but that prompt students to choose a stance from several options.

Embed the questions into the visuals of your presentation or create slides with the questions on them.  
- Review the requirements of the technology so you are comfortable with it before using it in the classroom.
- Ensure the questions are legible to everyone in the class.

---

1 Please use your department’s Informational Technology Services if using clickers for the first time.
Ensure each student has a device with clicker capabilities when they enter the classroom.

- If you are using clickers:
  - In some cases, students purchase their own clicker, which they can use in multiple classes.
  - Your school or department might have clickers that students can borrow.
    - In some cases, students borrow a clicker for the entire semester.
    - In other cases, you could distribute clickers to students as they walk into the classroom or have the clickers on students’ desks.
  - If students are using their smartphones or computers:
    - make sure they are familiar with the website you are using.
    - See “Technology” on the Additional Resources page for clicker website options.
- For the first time that students use clickers or a polling website, instruct students how to access the clicker questions and have the students try them out before class begins.

**During**

Display the question to the class.

- Give students time to read the question and reflect before prompting them to answer.
- Be prepared to read the question and choices for students with visual impairment.

Tally the results.

- Let students know when you are going to close the survey.
- The software will add the totals and format them in a graph.
- Depending on your learning objectives, decide whether to reveal the results of the first round of polling.

Give students a few minutes to “turn-and-talk” with a neighbor about some aspect of the question.

- Only allow four to five minutes.
- There are many follow-up questions to choose from, including:
  - asking students to explain why they chose their answer
  - having students convince their partner to change their answer

Optional: Ask one or two students to share what he/she learned from his/her conversation.

- This can be useful to get feedback on students’ thinking processes.
- At this stage, consider having students make an argument for one answer or another.

Ask the students to again respond to the poll to see if the results change.

- It is recommended that you reveal the answer after a second round of polling, and then discuss your rationale.

**After**

Collect clickers from students, if students used clickers provided by the class.

- If you provided clickers to the students, ask students to deposit their clickers as they leave the classroom or have a student(s) collect them.
Use the information from the polling to craft the foci of your next class.

- If there remains major confusion or misunderstanding of the content, you may need to review it during your next class meeting.

Written by Lauren Britt-Elmore
Doctoral Candidate, Higher Education
Harvard Graduate School of Education